CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for the distribution of fonts, the method comprising:

    a font consumer requesting a font from a font provider;

5   the font provider accessing subscription information for the font consumer;

    the font provider sending the requested font to the font consumer depending on the

        subscription information; and

    the font consumer receiving the requested font and providing the requested font to an

        application.

10   2. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of the font consumer requesting the

font from the font provider comprises:

    the font consumer accessing a web site of the font provider;

    the font consumer logging onto the web site; and

    the font consumer identifying the requested font.

15   3. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of the font provider accessing the

subscription information for the font consumer comprises:

    accessing a subscriber database;

    looking up the font consumer in the subscriber database; and

    reading font privileges associated with the font consumer.

20   4. A method as claimed in claim 3, wherein the step of the font provider accessing the

subscription information for the font consumer further comprises debiting an account of

the font consumer.

5. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of the font provider sending the

requested font to the font consumer comprises:

25   the font provider encrypting the font prior to transmission to the font consumer.

6. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of the font provider sending the requested font to the font consumer comprises:

    the font provider giving privilege information with the font, the privileges information defining approved uses for the requested font by the font consumer.

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7. A method as claimed in claim 6, wherein the step of the font provider sending the requested font to the font consumer comprises:

    the font provider giving lifetime information with the font, the lifetime information defining a time period for which the font consumer is authorized to use the font.

8. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of the font provider sending the

10 requested font to the font consumer comprises:

    the font provider giving lifetime information with the font, the lifetime information defining a time period for which the font consumer is authorized to use the font.

9. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of the font consumer receiving the requested font and providing the requested font to an application comprises:

15   installing the font on the font consumer.

10. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of the font consumer receiving the requested font and providing the requested font to the application comprises:

    installing the font in random access memory of the font consumer.

11. A font manager for a computer, comprising:

20   a font request interceptor receiving demands for fonts from applications running on the computer;

    a font retriever for requesting the demanded fonts from a remote font provider if the demanded fonts are not installed on the computer;

    a font installer for receiving and installing the demanded fonts; and

25   a font tracker for controlling use of the demanded fonts by the applications in response to privilege information received from the remote font provider.

12. A font manager as claimed in claim 11, wherein the font retriever provides subscription information to the remote font provider.

13. A font manager as claimed in claim 11, wherein the font retriever accesses a web site of the font provider and logs onto the web site to be identified by the font provider.

5   14. A font manager as claimed in claim 11, wherein the font retriever decrypts the demanded font.

15. A font manager as claimed in claim 11, wherein the font tracker monitors use of the demanded font to enforce use of the demanded fonts consistent with the received privilege information.

10   16. A font manager as claimed in claim 11, wherein the font tracker disables the demanded after expiry of a time period defined by the privilege information.

17. A font manager as claimed in claim 11, wherein the font installer installs the demanded font into random access memory of the font consumer.

18. A method for the distribution of fonts, the method comprising:

15   a font consumer requesting a font from a font provider and providing payment for the
           font;

         the font provider sending the requested font to the font consumer along with a license
             for the font consumer that enables the font consumer to use the font for a
             specified period of time; and

20   the font consumer receiving the requested font and providing the requested font to an
             application for the specified period of time.

19. A method as claimed in claim 18, further comprising the font provider accessing subscription information for the font consumer.

20. A method as claimed in claim 18, wherein the step of the font consumer requesting
25   the font from the font provider comprises:

the font consumer accessing a web site of the font provider;

the font consumer logging onto the web site; and

the font consumer identifying the requested font.

21. A method as claimed in claim 18, wherein the step of the font provider sending the
requested font to the font consumer comprises:

the font provider encrypting the font prior to transmission to the font consumer.

22. A method as claimed in claim 18, wherein the step of the font provider sending the
requested font to the font consumer comprises:

the font provider giving privilege information with the font, the privileges information
defining approved uses for the requested font by the font consumer.

23. A method as claimed in claim 22, wherein the step of the font provider sending the
requested font to the font consumer comprises:

the font provider giving lifetime information with the font, the lifetime information
defining a time period for which the font consumer is authorized to use the font.

24. A method as claimed in claim 18, wherein the step of the font provider sending the
requested font to the font consumer comprises:

the font provider giving lifetime information with the font, the lifetime information
defining the specified time period for which the license is valid.